

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Tri-County Planning Body Meeting
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025
Time: 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Place: Metro Council Chambers, 600 NE Grand Ave, Portland, OR 97232 and Zoom Webinar
Purpose: The Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) will discuss and vote on a Regional Investment Fund proposal and receive a presentation on the Healthcare Implementation Plan.

Member attendees

Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde (she/her), Yoni Kahn (he/him), Yvette Marie Hernandez (she/her), Cameran Murphy (they/them), Cristina Palacios (she/her), Co-chair Steve Rudman (he/him), Mindy Stadlander (she/her), Sahaan McKelvey (he/him), Monta Knudson (he/him), Eboni Brown (she/her), Zoi Coppiano (she/her), Nicole Larson (she/her)

Elected delegates

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington (she/her), Metro Councilor Christine Lewis (she/her), Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson (she/her)

Absent delegates

Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith (she/her)

County staff representatives

Clackamas County – Vahid Brown (he/him), Lauren Decker (she/her), Multnomah County – Dan Field (he/him), Cristina Castaño (she/her), Lawashia Mowe (she/her), Washington County – Nicole Stingh (she/her), Molly Rogers (she/her)

Metro staff

Michael Garcia (he/him), Abby Ahern (she/her), Liam Frost (he/him), Ruth Adkins (she/her), Valeria McWilliams (she/her), Patricia Rojas (she/her), Jane Marie Ford (she/her)

Kearns & West facilitators

Ben Duncan (he/him), María Verano (she/her)

Note: The meeting was recorded via Zoom; therefore, this meeting summary will remain at a high-level overview. Please review the recording and archived meeting packet for details and presentation slides.

Summary of Meeting Decisions

- The Committee approved the February 12, 2025 meeting summary.
- The Committee approved the three RIF Proposals as follows.
 - **Clackamas County:** Amend the Coordinated Entry Implementation Plan to include Clackamas County's Move Forward initiative as a strategy under the Coordinated Entry goal recommendation to explore opportunities for co-enrollment in other systems.
 - **Washington County:** Amend the Employee Recruitment and Retention Implementation plan to include Washington County's transition plan as a strategy

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under the Recruitment and Retention goal “assessing reasonable scale of outcomes and caseloads as it relates to compensation.”

- **Multnomah County:** Motioned to approve the proposal as proposed and presented.
 - By using unspent Regional Investment Funds (RIF) we will protect the goals set forth in the regional SHS program and ensure safe and responsible program implementation.
 - The funds will be spent on maintaining existing programs in Health Care System alignment, Coordinated Entry, HMIS, Landlord Engagement & Recruitment, Technical Assistance and Training.
- Metro staff told TCPB that the original requests from the counties would require a code amendment. This information was shared before the presentations began. The group expressed concerns about any code amendment, even if one time only.

Welcome and Introductions

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, welcomed attendees, provided reminders about microphone use and safety, and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde provided opening remarks, expressing interest in the investment fund proposal and seeking clarification on how it aligns with SHS priorities. She also noted the importance of reviewing the Healthcare Implementation Plan.

Decision: Co-chair Steve Rudman, Co-chair Elizalde, Yoni Kahn, Yvette Marie Hernandez, Cameran Murphy, Cristina Palacios, Mindy Stadlander, Sahaan McKelvey, Monta Knudson, Eboni Brown, Zoi Coppiano, Nicole Larson, Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington, Metro Councilor Christine Lewis, and Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson approved the February meeting summary without edits. There were no abstentions or rejections.

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Conflict of Interest

Cristina P. declared a conflict of interest as Housing Oregon is on Metro’s contractor list and could potentially receive future Supportive Housing Services (SHS) funding.

Yvette noted that she works for Home Forward which receives SHS funding, but she participates in the TCPB as a community member.

Yoni declared a conflict of interest as the Northwest Pilot Project receives SHS funding. He noted that he serves on the TCPB to share provider perspectives and does not represent his employer.

Zoi declared a conflict of interest as Community Action receives SHS funding.

Mindy disclosed a contract between HealthShare and Metro.

Cameran acknowledged Boys & Girls Aid’s SHS funding.

Eboni shared that their organization, Greater Good NW, receives SHS funding.

Monta declared a conflict of interest as JOIN receives SHS funding.

Sahaan declared a conflict of interest as Self Enhancement Inc (SEI) receives SHS funds. He noted that SHS does not fund his position and that he serves on the TCPB to share provider perspectives.

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Regional Investment Fund (RIF) Proposal

Metro Presentation

Liam Frost, Metro, provided an overview of the county proposals, noting that they included requests to use the Regional Investment Fund (RIF) for urgent, one-time expenditures, some of which may not align with existing regional goals. He explained that approving these proposals would serve as a recommendation to Metro Council to allow temporary exceptions to current spending restrictions. This would not be a permanent code change but rather a one-time authorization in response to immediate funding needs.

Q&A

Ben facilitated a clarifying question and answer discussion.

- **Co-chair Rudman** appreciated the presentation but is concerned about federal cuts in a few years and the sustainability of funding, especially for high-need populations. He stresses the need for a holistic conversation about rental assistance and the connection to Section 8.
- **Co-chair Elizalde** supported the concept, particularly the co-enrollment idea, and advocated for more data on the pilot plan. She stressed the importance of ensuring funding helps stabilize people and wants the implementation plan to include employee retention strategies, particularly around compensation. She also struggled with adding some items to the plan but sees them as important for the future. She expressed concerns about bundling multiple funding requests together and emphasized that counties have worked hard to align proposals with regional goals. She suggested counties should commit to integrating these expenses into their long-term funding plans, with a full review of whether these expenditures align with regional plans before making recommendations to Metro Council.
- **Cameran** emphasized the need to align efforts with regional goals while not disrupting the current metro code. They see this as a moment to address issues but want to ensure it does not change the overall structure of how funds are used in the future.
- **Yvette** expressed gratitude for the funds and emphasized the importance of not letting vulnerable individuals lose this support, stressing the trauma that could result from such a loss.
- **Eboni** raised concerns about the current lack of resources and future outcomes and questioned whether they will return to pre-SHS numbers in the next few years. She appreciated the innovation being discussed.
- **Zoi** believed that regional projects should not overshadow local ones, and the decision to move forward with these plans reflects responsible decision-making. She highlighted the importance of this approach for the region.
- **Cristina P.** supported the plan to keep people housed, especially amidst concerns about funding being pulled, and expressed support for maintaining assistance to ensure people feel supported.
- **Mindy** agreed with the discussions and appreciated the time and effort put into avoiding dire circumstances. She emphasized the need for essential focus and for having hard conversations about keeping tax revenues high.
- **Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson** appreciated the ongoing conversation between the counties and Metro about adjusting to funding gaps and noted that the goals outlined are crucial for moving forward.

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- **Monta** reflected on the uncertainty of current times, expressing concern about people losing voucher programs. He highlighted the challenges brought on by fluctuating marijuana tax dollars and stressed the importance of addressing the system's inequities.
- **Sahaan** appreciated the clarity provided about the RIF carryover, which shifted him from disagreement to agreement. He stresses that regional work should be intentionally scaled across counties to ensure alignment with broader goals, advocating for collaborative efforts rather than separate county projects.
- **Yoni** supported the conversation but expressed concerns about the surprise factor in decision-making and emphasized the collective obligation to protect each other from unexpected challenges. He stressed the importance of utilizing all funding sources and aligning efforts for more cohesive regional work.
- **Nicole L.** stressed the need to focus on the most vulnerable populations and ensure that the expenditures align with regional goals and support housing efforts effectively.
- **Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington** shared her plans to abstain from voting and to honor the decisions made by others in the room. She reflected on the journey to define regional goals and the volatility of the income tax source and expressed hope that future work plans will allow for bravery and risk-taking without compromising the goals.
- **Mero Councilor Christine Lewis** stated that Metro Council is looking for guidance and direction from TCPB regarding how to proceed with these funding requests.
- **Question, Sahaan:** Do the budget gaps counties face affect fiscal years 2025 or 2026?
 - **Metro Response, Liam:** There are budget gaps in both fiscal years.
- **Question, Cameran:** Does approval of the proposals serve as a recommendation to Metro Council rather than a direct ordinance change? Does this mean counties could use RIF funding for non-regional goals without Metro Council's explicit approval? Does today's vote only approve one-time use of funds without permanently altering future spending policies?
 - **Metro Response, Liam:** Yes, TCPB's approval acts as a recommendation, and Metro Council would still need to approve the expense. Additionally, Metro Council must approve any exceptions for non-regional expenditures. Lastly, you are correct, this is a temporary authorization, not a precedent for future funding changes.
- **Comment, Co-chair Elizalde:** It is not okay to assume that these proposals are not aligned with our plans and work. Additionally, I would like to ask the counties to make a commitment to connecting these proposals to the work. Lastly, Is there a way to amend an existing implementation plan so that the work falls under it?

Clackamas County Proposal

Vahid Brown presented Clackamas County's request for up to \$2.5 million from RIF carryover funds to launch a three-year initiative focused on improving financial stability for households and ensuring that individuals experiencing homelessness have the support needed to transition into permanent housing.

The initiative aims to help families and individuals by enrolling them in income-increasing and self-sufficiency programs, giving them the tools to become financially independent over time. Additionally, Clackamas County plans to implement a three-year housing assistance program, ensuring that those experiencing homelessness have continued access to stable housing as they work toward long-term solutions. Recognizing the barriers that often prevent individuals from accessing housing, the county will also invest in diversion programming, designed to help people secure alternative housing arrangements before entering the homelessness system.

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Washington County Proposal

Nicole Stingh introduced Washington County's proposal, requesting up to \$9 million in RIF carryover funds to establish a stabilization fund aimed at mitigating the effects of anticipated budget shortfalls. The county plans to gradually scale down funding over the next three years, allowing service providers and housing programs to transition more smoothly rather than facing immediate, drastic cuts. One of the key components of the proposal is ensuring that shelters remain open and operational, particularly while awaiting additional funding sources to come online. To support frontline workers affected by funding changes, the county will use a portion of the funds to cover up to six months of staff salaries, ensuring continuity of care and preventing sudden job losses among essential service providers. Additionally, recognizing that some providers will still need to downsize, Washington County intends to offer transition assistance for case managers and other critical staff, helping them find alternative employment opportunities or retraining options within the housing and social services sector.

Multnomah County Proposal

Dan Field presented Multnomah County's request for up to \$8.5 million in RIF carryover funds to maintain critical homeless services and implement new healthcare system alignment efforts for vulnerable populations.

The funding would be used to ensure that key service providers continue operating, particularly those engaged in the Culturally Specific Collaborative, a program that provides tailored support to communities disproportionately affected by homelessness. Additionally, \$650,000 from the proposal would be allocated toward healthcare system alignment, creating a more integrated approach to housing and medical care, particularly for medically vulnerable individuals.

Clackamas County Roundtable Discussion

Ben facilitated a roundtable discussion.

- **Question, Co-chair Elizalde:** I have concerns about whether this initiative is truly regional in nature or if it primarily serves local Clackamas County interests.
 - **Clackamas County Response, Vahid:** The program fills key gaps in regional services and aligns with TCPB's goals by supporting economic stability and permanent housing solutions.
- **Question, Sahaan:** I'm curious about how the program will continue after the initial three-year period and whether Clackamas County has plans for long-term sustainability.
 - **Clackamas County Response, Vahid:** This is definitely a challenge, but the county is actively looking into alternative funding sources to sustain services beyond the initial period.
- **Question, Cameran:** I'm wondering if this initiative overlaps with existing regional programs and if there's a risk of duplicating efforts that are already in place.
 - **Clackamas County Response, Vahid:** The proposal is designed to fill an unmet need and complement existing programs, not replace them.
- **Comment, Mindy:** I support the initiative but want to highlight the importance of ongoing reporting and accountability to ensure the program remains effective.
 - **Clackamas County Response, Vahid:** We commit to providing regular updates on the program's outcomes.

Voting Results for Clackamas County Proposal

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Following discussion, Co-chair Elizalde moved to amend the Coordinated Entry Implementation Plan to include Clackamas County's Move Forward Initiative as a strategy under the Coordinated Entry Goal Recommendation to explore opportunities for co-enrollment in other systems. Cristina P seconded the motion, reinforcing the value of integrating Clackamas County's approach into the existing regional framework.

Clackamas County Decision

Co-chair Rudman, Co-chair Elizalde, Yoni, Yvette, Cameran, Cristina P., Mindy, Sahaan, Monta, Eboni, Zoi, Nicole L., Washington County Chair Harrington, Metro Councilor Lewis, and Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson voted to pass the motion. There were no abstentions or rejections. The motion passed.

Washington County Roundtable Discussion

Ben facilitated a roundtable discussion.

- **Question, Co-Chair Elizalde:** There's concern that this proposal may only delay difficult funding decisions rather than addressing the root issue.
 - **Washington County Response, Nicole S.:** The stabilization fund is designed to give providers time to adjust and strategically prepare for future funding realities.
- **Question, Co-chair Rudman:** Will this funding be used to expand services or to simply maintain existing programs?
 - **Washington County Response, Nicole S.:** The funds are strictly for stabilization purposes and will not support any new program expansions.
- **Comment, Washington County Chair Harrington:** There's concern about what happens once the transition period ends and whether service providers will still face significant funding gaps.
 - **Washington County Response, Nicole S.:** Washington County is actively seeking alternative funding solutions to prevent an abrupt end to services.
- **Comment, Mindy:** It would be beneficial to include formal reporting requirements to track staff retention rates and ensure the stabilization funds have the intended impact.
 - **Washington County Response, Nicole S.:** We commit to providing quarterly updates to the TCPB.

Voting Results for Washington County Proposal

Co-chair Elizalde moved to amend the Employee Recruitment and Retention Implementation plan to include Washington County's transition plan as a strategy under the Recruitment and Retention goal "assessing reasonable scale of outcomes and caseloads as it relates to compensation." Nicole L. seconded the motion, stressing the importance of structured oversight. This again reinforced the importance of integrating this work into the existing regional framework. The intention of both the Clackamas County and the Washington County motions approved were to make it clear from the perspective of the TCBP these proposal are aligned with our existing expectation and goal areas

Washington County Decision

Co-chair Rudman, Co-chair Elizalde, Yoni, Yvette, Cameran, Cristina P., Mindy, Sahaan, Monta, Eboni, Zoi, Nicole L., Washington County Chair Harrington, Metro Councilor Lewis, and Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson voted to pass the motion. There were no abstentions or rejections. The motion passed.

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Multnomah County Roundtable Discussion

Yoni moved to approve the proposal as presented by Multnomah County.

TCPB members wanted to discuss the proposal before moving a motion forward. Ben facilitated a roundtable discussion

- **Comment, Co-chair Elizalde:** I cannot vote for the proposal if it requires a Metro Code change. My concern isn't with the proposal itself, but with the idea of removing the regional nature of the RIF through a policy change.
 - **Multnomah County Response, Dan:** Multnomah County's FY 2025 budget had already been adopted in June and included previously approved spending aligned with regional goals. What TCPB is being asked to decide is whether Multnomah County's new spending on Coordinated Entry and Landlord Recruitment aligns with existing implementation plans.
- **Comment, Co-chair Elizalde:** I suggest tabling portions of the proposal that aren't tied to an approved implementation plan and moving forward only with the Coordinated Entry and Landlord Recruitment funding.
 - **Multnomah County Response, Dan:** The proposal is time-sensitive, and it's important that we address it all together.
- **Question, Sahaan:** I'd like to know if Metro Council would need to amend the code to approve the proposal. Also, do unused RIF funds from the first three years automatically roll over into the year four RIF allocation, or would they need explicit approval?
 - **Metro Response, Liam:** All future RIF expenditures need to be reviewed under the TCPB-adopted process.
- **Question, Sahaan:** Can you clarify if Metro Council must amend the code to approve this proposal?
 - **Metro Response, Liam:** A code amendment could be framed as a one-time exception while maintaining the RIF structure for the long term.
- **Comment, Sahaan:** I'd feel more comfortable if this were explicitly framed as a one-time approval for the funds allocated in the first three years.
- **Comment, Co-chair Rudman:** I want to emphasize the importance of maintaining RIF as a regional funding source. Also, I question whether 5% is the right allocation for regional investments going forward. The term "one-time" is crucial so that we don't set a precedent for future exceptions.
- **Comment, Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson,** I recognize that the need for a code change came up late, and this was not clear when the proposal was first developed. I am supportive of the proposal as a one-time measure, and I want to emphasize that it's designed to align with regional goals.
- **Comment, Mindy:** I share concerns about setting a precedent but believe TCPB can explicitly state that this is a one-time approval to provide clarity.
- **Comment, Monta:** TCPB still controls the RIF, and I'm wondering if allowing a one-time use really poses any risk to the integrity of the fund.
 - **Metro Response, Liam:** There has always been some ambiguity in the RIF process. We would need to internally assess the implications of this request. Metro Council is not interested in permanently changing the RIF but is open to a one-time exception.
 - **Multnomah County Response Dan:** Multnomah County is not requesting a permanent change, but rather asking TCPB to decide whether this specific funding aligns with regional goals.

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- **Comment, Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson:** I want to affirm that Multnomah County is committed to ensuring that all expenditures support TCPB goals and implementation plans.

Voting Results for Multnomah County Proposal

After the member discussion, Monta seconded the motion.

Decision: Co-chair Rudman, Yoni, Yvette, Cameran, Cristina P., Mindy, Sahaan, Monta, Eboni, Zoi, Nicole L., Washington County Chair Harrington, Metro Councilor Lewis, and Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson voted to pass the motion. There was one abstention and no rejections. The motion passed. Co-chair Elizalde abstained from the vote due to concerns about potential Metro Code changes. The motion passed.

Follow-up and Next Steps

Following the vote, Liam stated that Metro would need to develop additional metrics to ensure proper oversight and alignment with the amendment. Co-chair Rudman reiterated that, since this was explicitly a one-time approval, the discussion should not become overly drawn out. Metro staff confirmed that they would review the implications of the vote and determine the next steps necessary to finalize the funding process.

Closing and Next Steps

Ben shared that the next steps are:

- The next meeting will be extended by 30 minutes to address backlog items.
- The April agenda will include the Healthcare Implementation Plan approval, Coordinated Entry Report, and SHS Annual Report.
- Next meeting: April 9, 2025, 4:00 – 6:30 PM.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:20 p.m.